

Honorable Edgardo Ramos
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Ramos:

My name is Ashley Cunill, formerly known as Ashley Chavez. I am the current Director and Speech-Language Pathologist at CAPS International Inc. I first joined CAPS, formerly known as Crystal Academy in 2009, as employee #1. I was a young 21 year old, recently graduated with my Bachelors and looking to begin my career of working with Special Needs Children.

The first couple years at Crystal Academy, David worked more behind the scenes taking care of matters such as finances, the software we used for therapy and management of clients, and completion of building and putting together our therapy space, etc. During my first year, I strictly provided 1:1 therapy with children in behavior analysis. Beginning my 2nd year, I took on more leadership responsibilities such as: scheduling clients with therapist, updating program books, holding team meetings and so forth. About the 3rd year, we had already switched directors at least twice. It was difficult to find someone who possessed a degree of one of the 3 types of therapies (ABA, speech or OT), and be able to work and mesh those 3 domains to work together for the children.

About the 3rd year at CA, I had contacted David myself, and expressed my concerns of how the center was progressing and how more leadership was needed. This was my first experience in having to have a professional conversation, and I did it all wrong. I was in fact unprofessional, immature and spoke out of emotions with minimal facts. It was the first time in my professional career that I worked with David. David was patient, understanding and kind. He took the time to listen to everything I had to say to help improve the problem, but also to help guide me in professional development.

Since that day, the relationship between David and me, along with his wife, continued to improve my professional development, but David became more of a father figure. Since starting at CA, David witnessed my growth professionally but also personally. He supported me through starting and completing grad school (2012-2015), getting engaged (2012), buying my first home (2014), then married (2014), and other life crisis that affected my family. Through the hard times that hit our family, David & his wife were my constant support. He opened up his home whenever I needed somewhere to go, he offered financial help when I couldn't afford bills because my husband lost his job, and gave me fatherly advice when I had to make difficult adult decisions.

Besides my personal situations, I have also been blessed to be a part of his family and be part of the growth of their sons, David and Joshua. David is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and because of the amazing and dedicated father David Sr is, I have been able to see David Jr flourish to the young man he is today, and overcome many, if not all, the obstacles he has faced. Children growing up learn from their parents. Boys growing up need their father to help them learn life skills such as shaving and expectations during and after puberty. These concepts are even more complex when the person has special needs. David Sr is patient with David Jr and works with his son from the moment he wakes up until the moments he goes to bed, while in his care. David Jr can't necessarily be told something 1 time and expect him to understand and process it all. David Jr is literal. He requires every detail of every step not only to be told to him, but shown to him, over and over until he grasps the concept and

understands. It's not just explaining a set of directions. David Sr is that person for David Jr, and I have been blessed to see first-hand how caring and compassionate David Sr is. He does not get frustrated, he works at David Jr's pace, he repeats steps 1 time or a 1 million times, whatever is needed so that David Jr understands.

David Jr. adores his father. They have a bond that is unique and indescribable. They understand each other, and simply put, need each other. David needs his father around. He will need him for as long as the future allows David Sr. to be around. David Jr works daily to learn skills every day to assist him to be as independent as possible, but will ultimately always need guidance for everyday tasks and needs. More so, he will need someone who understands cognitive deficits, who is kind, who wants to help him succeed, who wants to teach him, but overall, do it all with love and passion.

David, since meeting him in 2009, has made sure to do all that is needed not only for his own family needs, but also other families also affected by ASD. Crystal Academy was built to serve the needs of parents having to commute to various places all day to give their children all the therapies they require. When the doors opened in 2009, David Jr was not a part of the first children enrolled, because Crystal did not serve his needs yet, Crystal Academy continued to expand to serve more children. Before Crystal Academy became a registered non-profit organization, while David ran the business side of the company, "profit" was never our main focus. The company's financial goal was to make enough money to pay the staff, buy supplies for therapy and maintenance. The main focus of Crystal was to help as many children as possible. David provided gracious discounts, between 20 to 50% off total invoices if it meant another child we could provide excellent service to.

In 2012, I was then promoted to Program Coordinator. At this time I started the venture of having Crystal Academy contracted with insurance companies to be able to serve children that could not afford private pay. Once in net-work, we realized that there was a 45-day turn around, if the claim was not denied, for payment of service. Over the course of the next few years, Crystal Academy lived pay check to pay check due to the delay in payments from insurance. This caused a lot of stress, and it seemed we didn't know if we would be able to keep our doors open much longer. However, David was determined to keep Crystal Academy open. By this point, we had become known as the school that took in the severe behavioral children that other schools were denying. David's fear was, "if we aren't open for these children, who is going to teach them." David made the decision to "donate" from his own personal funds to the company to help with payroll, and whenever the company could, Crystal would pay him back with no interest.

Over these past 10 years, I personally have experienced only great things from David Pike Sr. I have learned and grown professionally, have been able to refine my abilities to sympathize and empathize with parents of special needs children, have learned how to manage a growing company which now employs over 50 people, I have learned how to make decisions based on facts rather than emotions, look at problems in the moment and how my decision affect short term and long term, all under the guidance of David. He is a highly respected and admired person, not only by me, but all the parents here at Crystal Academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Cumill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Cumill, MS, CCC-SLP